

Anna Marie Young

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Sent: Monday, March 15, 2010 4:06 PM
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Subject: Strategic Growth Council

Dear Members of the Strategic Growth Council:

I would like to take a moment to convey Greenbelt Alliance's thoughts regarding the Strategic Growth Council's Planning Grants and Incentives Program guidelines. Greenbelt Alliance is the leading land conservation and smart growth advocate in the San Francisco Bay Area and we believe the guidelines have come a long way since the effort to craft them began. They now are clearly consistent with the state's planning priorities, articulate the importance of advancing a full range of benefits from smart growth, and make a clear linkage to meeting California's greenhouse reduction goals. Greenbelt Alliance believes the staff who has worked on the guidelines have done an excellent job of taking input. However, we'd like to voice our support for a handful of surgical changes:

1. Greenbelt Alliance supports the proposal, voiced by CalGOC at a recent hearing, to shift the majority of funds (roughly 80 percent) into Focus Area #2 and then have the majority of funds within that pot go to local governments. We feel that this action would be a significant show of support to the goals of SB 375 as funds from this pot could be used by local governments to take steps consistent with Sustainable Communities Strategies. In other words, it would help overcome the somewhat justified concern that SB 375 is an unfunded mandate upon local governments.
2. We believe that 20 percent of the funds from each Focus Area (not a set aside from all Focus Areas) should be targeted to disadvantaged communities to ensure that affordable housing and other needs of low income neighborhoods are addressed via this program.
3. Greenbelt Alliance supports the concept of establishing an advisory committee to help review applications. Properly assembled the advisory committee would ensure that a broad range of expertise would be utilized in reviewing the applications. The advisory committee could have a makeup similar to the RTAC.

Again, we appreciate all of the hard work and good thinking you has been put into the guidelines.

I'd be happy to talk to any of you about these thoughts if you'd like.

Regards,

Jeremy Madsen

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